

## **Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee Meeting Notes**

**March 29, 2021**

**5:30 p.m.**

**(updated April 3, 2021)**

Committee Members Present: CCM Viagran, Sue Ann Pemberton, Aaronetta Pierce (Tri Chairs), Ramon Vasquez, Sharon Skrobarcek, Carey Latimore, Forrest Byas, Aron Pena, Ernesto Rodriguez, Seneca McAdams, Alan Huffines, Christine Jacobs, Davis Phillips, Roger Perez, Anthony Edwards, Patricia Mejia, George Cisneros, Bill Brendel, Walter Serna, Sharon Aguillen, Matt Brown, Dave Krupinski

Others Present: Andy Segovia, Lori Houston, Rhea Roberts, Tom Filopoulos, Victoria Shoemaker, Kellie Alcozer (COSA), Kate Rogers (ATI), Scott Carpenter (HDRC), John Kasman, Doug Nickrent, Melissa Simmons (PGAV), Eric Kramer, Claire Fellman (Reed Hilderbrand), Will Kroll (Pape-Dawson), Morgan Newman (HKS), Tom Butler (Broaddus), Francisco Gónima (Facilitator)

Committee Members Absent: Ann McGlone, Naomi Miller, Frank Ruttenberg, Rudy Rodriguez, Matt Duncan, Melissa Killen, Wendell Hall

CCM Viagran opened the meeting and welcomed the committee. She recognized Andy Segovia, Kate Rogers, and Lori Houston on the call. She mentioned that since March there have been two ACAC meetings and three listening circles. There have also been project coordination meetings with the Management Committee. Tri Chairs Sue Ann Pemberton and Aaronetta Pierce also welcomed the committee and thanked them for their participation.

Francisco Gónima welcomed everyone and explained how the meeting will work. Following the presentation, each member will have about a minute to weigh in on how it meets the vision and guiding principles and 5 key concepts of the plan. Following those comments, the public may submit comments.

Lori Houston gave a brief presentation on what the committee's role is, what it has done and what the next steps are. The committee's role is to provide citizen feedback on the Alamo Plan to make sure it is in keeping with the Vision and Guiding Principles. At the last meeting, an update on the archaeology process was provided. The City will initiate an archival investigation of the mission site that is on City property. There will be a new committee dedicated to guide development of the archival investigation. Once the investigation is complete, the city will develop a plan of action for the site and an archaeology committee that includes representatives of local groups and the Alamo Mission Archaeology Advisory Committee.

Over the next three months the Alamo Citizens Advisory Committee will work on three tasks. The first is to review site strategy design assumptions and make recommendations to the management committee. That is what is going on now. May, June and July will be an overview of the interpretive plan and content development. Task 3 is the design work from August to December. Lori reviewed the next steps. March 31 the committee will meet again and vote on design assumptions, the Management Committee will meet soon after, on April 8 there is a special City Council briefing, April 15 City Council will consider the changes to the lease with the GLO that reflect the design assumptions.

John Kasman with PGAV Destinations and Eric Kramer with Reed Hilderbrand presented. The plan has always been based on the Vision and Guiding Principles. They looked at potential new parameters with direction from the Executive and Management Committee. Those are that the Cenotaph will not move and will be repaired, the mission footprint will be delineated with paving changes, the Plaza will remain open and accessible without railings, parades and key rituals consistent with tradition and the guiding principles will be accommodated, and the streets will be closed as planned. Alamo between Crockett and Commerce, and Crockett from Losoya to Alamo will remain available for service and emergency vehicles. Alamo Street between Houston and Crockett may be closed by June 1 to allow for programming and testing of street closures. They tested those against the 5 key concepts of the master plan: 1. Restore the Church and Long Barrack, 2. Delineate the historic footprint, 3. Recapture the historic mission plaza and create a sense of reverence and respect, 4. Create a world class museum and visitor center, and 5. Create a sense of arrival and enhance connectivity between the site and other public spaces. They looked at the spatial definition, visitor experience, and interpretive elements. This is not design, this is a planning exercise. There is much design needed later in the year. The presentation included an explanation of how the plaza space can be defined with paving patterns, planters, and trees. This could allow the parade to continue through the plaza in a quiet zone. There are different ways to consider the visitor experience. The site can have flexible management options that allow the plaza to remain open to pedestrians while the museum and the Church, Long Barrack, and gardens have managed access. Orientation hubs can be created. Interpretive elements throughout the site will tell all the stories.

Francisco explained how the public can participate by sending text messages with questions and comments and the public input portal was opened for comment submission.

Committee members were asked to provide individual comment in a roll call on whether they felt the recommendations are in keeping with the vision and guiding principles and the 5 key concepts in the Master Plan. Members were asked to keep their comments brief as there would be subsequent time for dialogue and deliberation after public input.

Sharon Aguillen – Yes, agree it falls in line with key concepts and what we've been charged with. Excited about paving, landscaping. Recognize this is not design. Excited for the out of town visitor experience.

Bill Brendel – Agree with Sharon. The decision to keep the Cenotaph in place, not lowering ground plane, not one secure perimeter has opened up design for non-confrontational issues. Opens up other options, close streets early, better feel for Plaza. All rejuvenating to plan and exciting.

Matt Brown – Agree with what has been said. On board, great framework, great vision. Commend tri chairs. Space is epicenter of many spaces and stories, project is connection to world class experience downtown, expansion of vision to world class experience. History will continue to be made in the Plaza.

Forrest Byas – Agree with most that has been said, delineation, use of pavers or other materials. Accessibility of plaza – somewhat in agreement with, not proper to have people coming and going through living history demonstrations. Like the 18 pounder exhibit coming up. Need to get street closed soon for that.

George Cisneros – Shows more sensitivity to San Antonio than previous plans. Wants design to include full demarcation of all cemeteries. Significant that archaeology committee is more inclusive and will include local representation. Encourage people to address section 15 of lease. Wants to make sure Plaza belongs to City of San Antonio.

Col. Huffines – With Forrest. Overall plan is good, have some spots to address. Concerned with May 1 street closure to provide more safety for visitors.

Dave Krupinski – Agree with a lot of what has been said. Does meet 5 key concepts and the vision and guiding principles. Want to be cognizant of the construction schedule for when the city is hosting IPW. Visitor experience has been thought out well. Reverent sense of place, like pedestrian flow patterns and orientation hubs.

Carey Latimore – Not a lot to add. Good jobs to designers and team. One thing to stress is telling full stories of the stories we tell. Stories of historic buildings can lead to other places along history. Important to expand story.

Seneca McAdams – This has gone above and beyond. Happy with direction we're going in. Hit on all principles we're looking to address and keeping our sense of reverence on the site. Great step forward, happy to see that Cenotaph will be repaired. Agree with colleagues about pedestrian safety.

Christine Jacobs – Thanks to leadership. Think this plan is consistent with guiding principles. Encouraged by inclusive nature of overall approach, attention to anthropological and historical research, attention to descendant communities, cultural landscape. Appreciate more formal entry/exit to south, connection to other four missions. Look forward to collaborating on interpretive aspects to help support San Antonio community.

Patricia Mejia – Don't have much to add. Thanks to staff and consultants. One thing to highlight is staff's effort to create new archaeology committee.

Aron Pena – Not much more to add. Pleased with what's been proposed. Thanks to staff, glad we're moving forward, need to keep work going. Nothing else to add.

Roger Perez – moving in right direction, great continuation, keep going.

Davis Phillips – Yes, moving in right direction. Markings on visual shown to us make sense, but guests will not have that viewpoint, they may not make sense to visitors on the spot. Not completely clear – is there easy access from Alamo Plaza to Houston Street? A lot of effort has been given to how to accommodate parades twice per year. Need to also consider impact to all the businesses – including horse carriages and tour buses [that operate there every day, year round].

Ernesto Rodriguez – Agree with plan, it's good. Hope personal agendas don't hinder the plan.

Sharon Skrobarcek – Like the plan, what I see. Haven't seen anything I don't like. Concerned about rising damp on Alamo Church and the roof, would like more information about how to handle that. Look forward to seeing the interpretive piece as we move forward.

Walter Serna - Not a lot to add either, excited that the plan accounts for rich traditions of Fiesta, parades, King Antonio. Fiesta Commission wants to make sure that traditions continue at the Alamo. Thank you for including us, excited that parades can continue.

Ramon Vasquez – Thanks to the City, decisions are overdue. Thrilled to be working with colleagues on proposed reports. Early in reset, but don't think proposed ideas violate guiding principles. Not sure yet if it honors them, too early. Hoping they can enhance vision and guiding principles. Alamo is world heritage site, NHL and National Register district. Thinks this will be a section 106 project at some point. Need to do our due diligence. Part of cemetery is under federal courthouse; bodies have been found under Houston and Alamo Street. Should pay attention to UDC. Decisions should be transparent. Need to move forward with these things built in. Congratulations on all the hard work.

Aaronetta Pierce – Thanks everyone for thoughtful comments. Sign of progress that we're understanding and appreciating importance of location and importance of making it meaningful. Lots of work with interpretive plan ahead. As a landscape, now we have a beautiful story at the site. Still hard work ahead, we're moving ahead together.

Sue Ann Pemberton – Cannot disagree with presentation and recommendations. Delineating footprint without need for railings, enclosures, ground depressions is good moving forward and for Plaza access. Information kiosk will be critical component in years before visitor center and museum and for 24/7 component of site. Pleased there is a respect for San Antonio traditions and indigenous culture.

CCM Viagran – Thank you for participation and feedback. Want to make sure we get Mr. Edwards on the phone for comments. What is the best that can happen for us through this project? Thank you to consultants for expanding cultural landscape, public access. Want to incorporate as we move forward.

Lori Houston provided comments from Anthony Edwards over the phone. He is supportive of what is presented. With Cenotaph, wants to make sure research is done to correct omissions and mistakes, they should be addressed when we do the repair.

Francisco explained we will scroll through comments received. If it has previously been addressed, we will not spend time on it. (Comments and questions are included at the end of this document.) Comments and questions addressed include:

- Clarification on the Cenotaph repair process and plan. The repair plan will determine whether it needs to be disassembled to be repaired.
- When public meetings will be held.
- Timing of street closures – Alamo between Houston and Crockett Street may close by June 1 if City Council approves recommendations. Other streets will be studied and closed later.
- Tree cover and grasses will be used to provide shade and human comfort.
- Facility that will house Phil Collins collection – Alamo Trust is proposing a 25,000 square foot collections building to house exhibit until museum is built. It will comply with the Alamo viewshed protections and be done in late 2022.
- If possible, water will be incorporated in acequia interpretation.

- State completed an audit of Alamo spending that shows it has been managed appropriately. City of San Antonio will share that when project is started.
- Project is done with three partners: General Land Office, Alamo Trust, and City of San Antonio. GLO is responsible for restoration of Church and Long Barrack, Alamo Trust is responsible for fundraising for museum. City is responsible for construction of Plaza.
- City will work with stakeholders to close Alamo between Houston and Crockett, safety is a concern.
- Mayor has asked partners to revisit use of Crockett Block, Palace, Woolworth Buildings. The GLO and Alamo Trust are considering their repurposing.
- Events on Alamo Plaza will be reviewed, there will be a process to determine whether they will continue based on established traditions and consistency with vision and guiding principles.
- Process for how all stories will be told and content is developed. PGAV is working with Alamo staff and experts. These will be reviewed with ACAC. The Vision and Guiding Principles is included in telling all of the stories.
- GLO is not currently planning to replace the Church roof. It will be studied in the future.
- The GLO and Alamo Trust represent the interests of Texans beyond San Antonio on the project.

Committee discussion:

Sue Ann Pemberton – As discussed and mentioned by CCM Viagran, Vision and Guiding Principles are critical. Remind everyone that it's the whole document, not just the first page.

Aaronetta Pierce – Appreciate public comments. Most items raised are items we have tried to address. Like references to documentation and accuracy. We have scholars to help and we will ensure all has scholarly leadership supporting it. Committed to informing the public and we want to hear from you.

Francisco Gonima - We are constantly accepting comments. Public comment email is [AlamoPlan@Sanantonio.gov](mailto:AlamoPlan@Sanantonio.gov)

CCM Viagran – Thanks for public comments, need easily findable place for all meeting information. The March 31 meeting agenda has been published. Some committee members mentioned closing Alamo Street sooner. Safety is key, but we need to have conversations with business community and stakeholders.

Ramon Vasquez – Concerned that ATI/State would be controlling narrative of historical events at site. City partners should have a say in consultants chosen and narrative authored. The few documents he has seen from Alamo about Mission and cemetery history are highly questionable. Think we need to insert ourselves in that process. Committee worked hard to develop Vision and Guiding Principles around those stories. Want to see how everything relates to goals and themes. Need to rebuild trust.

Lori Houston – Great idea, how we need to frame discussion in May, June, and July. The Committee will help identify experts. Why we're taking time to look at interpretive plan.

Matt Brown – Reflection on feedback. Some people expressed “don’t do.” Behind comments is some concern or worry, we should try to understand concerns behind the comments. This is epicenter of Texas and American history, goes beyond Alamo boundaries.

George Cisneros – Support everyone’s concern and advocacy for highest level of scholarship and historical accuracy and research. How scholarship is translated into exhibit is complicated. Where bias can be obvious (Witte exhibit example). Make sure we’re part of whole process, through to making of exhibits. Make sure designers and designs are consistent with Vision and Guiding Principles.

Davis Phillips – Would like clarification on what next meeting will be.

Lori Houston – Wednesday meeting we will come back with high level statements that Committee can vote up or down, similar to what was done in August 2018.

Ernesto Rodriguez – Finds it insulting that people comment on research but they don’t know what is being done to promote the story. Many committed professionals are doing the research. People are always looking for more information.

Lori Houston – That is why we want to have the meetings this summer to explain what has been done. This body has not had a chance to see that work being done and wants to understand better.

Ramon Vasquez – Yes, especially since we helped author the foundation for the interpretive plan. We have not seen that information. Would like to see how it honors the work the committee did in 2014.

Col. Huffines – Discussion of bringing in experts to speak. Fantastic idea.

Sue Ann Pemberton –In listening to public comments, seems to be concern that we’re rewriting history. The goal is to expand and tell the full and more complete history. Not in rewriting of history business. Our goal is to tell bigger history. People should be able to understand the full history.

Col Huffines – Wants to know who are the experts and what topics will they speak on.

Lori Houston – We have a list of experts, members have sent more names. We will reach out to members to make sure we’re not missing anyone. This will be similar to what we did in 2014. Have list of experts that can speak to different themes in the plan.

Lori Houston – This Wednesday is last meeting for Task 1. Will present statements about design assumptions and ask committee to vote yes or no. That is how we will provide feedback to Management Committee. The meeting is at 5:30, also televised.

Aaronetta Pierce– Thanks for sharing, this is the beginning of a lot more sharing. Thanks to design team.

Sue Ann Pemberton – Always learn something new from listening to Ramon. There is a rich history and layering of site, we’ll always discover something new. Thanks everyone for participating and adding to this opportunity.

CCM Viagran – Thanks for taking the time today. I am keeping council members updated on what we’re doing. Look forward to discussions in task 2. Tri Chairs heard you that you want to be used as valued resource.

**Chat from Webex:**

From matthew brown to everyone: 6:07 PM

Thank you for emphasizing the world class experience of the entire Alamo area's evolution, as well as how that reaches out and influences throughout the greater downtown area even beyond the artificial boundaries of the freeways. I think this is a great and natural expansion of the original goal of a world class museum/visitor center.

from George Cisneros to everyone: 6:40 PM

We can expand the footprint of space consciousness if we place plaques or stones at the Mexican Army's artillery placements in La Villita, Hemisfair.

from George Cisneros to everyone: 6:47 PM

Davis, overhead drone imagery could be linked into tour guide apps available to visitors that include panoramic. views

from Davis Phillips to everyone: 7:13 PM

That could be very helpful, George - good point.

from Ramon Vasquez to everyone: 7:19 PM

This has to be made available to our Committee I have not seen this and the few documents I have seen in regards to mission history is very questionable. I am referring to what John just said.

from Lori Houston to everyone: 7:20 PM

Thanks Ramon. this will be presented to everyone in May but we will get this info out earlier.

from Ramon Vasquez to everyone: 7:23 PM

I don't believe that ATI or the State alone should be controlling the narrative or selecting consultants to author these historic events.

from Davis Phillips to everyone: 7:39 PM

nice job tonight, PGAV

from Christine Jacobs to everyone: 7:48 PM

Apologies for being on the phone only (and not on camera), my kids and I were in a car accident Saturday. Thank you for understanding. San Antonio Missions National Historical Park looks forward to participating in the next steps, especially within the context of the World Heritage Site. See you Wednesday!

**Public comments received through Poll Everywhere:**

So as a Texas that doesn't live in SA, who represents my views?

Can you please elaborate what the plan is to replace the roof of the chapel with a lighter one?

Does this plan include the Veterans Parade?

The Cenotaph should not be moved!

You keep saying tell the Stories. What exactly will be said in those Stories and will those stories be disclosed and or spot checked for historical accuracy?

Tree canopy traps heat that should be dissipating and would be dissipating if grass were used. Univ. of Utah studied this in 2020. Tree groves wouldn't

To follow is one of several studies of the efficacy of turf grass as a means of mitigating heat islands:  
<https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/10/201013175028.htm>

How is the committee ensuring transparency to the public, financial, planning and reverence to Texas heroes?

Randy Beale Director with This is Texas Freedom Force. The story is not to be lied about. The 1836 battle had nothing to do about race.

This Alamo plan is a remake of the previous one which did not have the approval of the citizens of Texas. Moving the Cenotaph and rewriting the history

Why wasn't this meeting made public sooner!

The battle needs to be the focus

Will the This Is Texas Freedom Force's Remember The Alamo Ceremony w/wreath laying still be able to host our annual event on the 1836 Footprint each year?

Moving in right direction. Like accessibility & connectivity. Concerned whether historic bldgs will be reused 4 museum. Essential!

Repairs to the Cenotaph are long overdue!

What is the exact timeline to repair and restore the Cenotaph. What is the exact plan? Will it be cleaned? Will it be dismantled to repair?

Would like to know why the Alamo Street closure is to be delayed into June, when a new cannon installation is coming within weeks? Increased foot traffic

Why should Alamo Plaza belong to the City of San Antonio? It should belong to all of Texas. Teri Mordica This is Texas Freedom Force

Monthly Accountability!



Why does the city of San Antonio and this commission believe it should drive these decisions versus the other 27 million Texans?

We need \$\$accountability!!!

The acequia as a mere marking on the site will be easily ignored. Treat it as a water feature so that visitors can see/hear water, at least partially.

Are you going to make the Texans out to be racists and that they were fighting for slavery during the Texas Revolution and Battle of 1836?

Thank you again for allowing the parades to continue in front of the Alamo chapel. It has been 130 year tradition and part of our cultural history.

The reimagine plan is wrong! It should be about the Alamo, not trees or bleachers. This is a Shrine, not a tourist trap!

I am of the opinion the ACAC has members that are exemplary in many fields associated with and about The Alamo.

Alamo Street must've closed and a push for the State to take the plaza

Why not tell the missions story at the other San Antonio missions and tell the 1836 Battle of the Alamo at the Alamo? This Is Texas Freedom Force

Did I miss any talk about PHIL Collins collection and timeline. Is there going to be a facility on Alamo premise first? And what is timeline on that?

Thank you for accommodating the Parades! The Battle of Flowers Parade is 130 years old and we represent the continuum of history. Thank you for acknowledgement

Why does something so historic as The Alamo have to be "reimagined" or " modernized" when TEXANS love it just the way it is?

The narrative as I hear it is that the defenders of the Alamo were racists and drunks that is not true. They fought for liberty for Texas

I really love these changes especially not enclosing the plaza. How soon will the street closures happen?

The San Antonio African American Community Archive and Museum appreciates the new direction. We are extremely interested in the museum exhibits.

Why wasn't this meeting held in person, so the public you address you face to face? No link for the YouTube Channel was listed on the city of San Antonio

What kind of repair Ed are you proposing be done to the cenotaph?

